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The Gull

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter
Volume 76 • No. 7 July-August 1994

Mountain Birding in El Dorado County: Part II

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Barn Swallows and Brown-headed Cowbirds, a relatively new avian resident in the Sierra, abound at the Ice House Store. Brewer's Blackbirds occur here, one of the few places you are likely to encounter them along this route. After obtaining any refreshments or articles you might need here, return back down the road approximately one-eighth of a mile and park on the right near a large boulder and a nearby sign for Silver Creek Campground. Walk across the road and follow an old logging road that leads up to the aspen grove. This former logging road is easy to locate on the east side of the main road. Look for a large rock blocking the entrance and head away from Ice House Store on it, following the trail for about 200 yards to the aspen grove. This is a delightful spot with an inviting grassy area bordered by a small stream and aspens. This is a wonderful area to spread a blanket and enjoy a picnic lunch. The birding here is terrific. With a little exploration, Green-tailed Towhees and Calliope Hummingbirds can be found. The aspen groves support a number of cavity nesters. Williamson's Sapsuckers are rare at this elevation in the Sierra, but they have been found in some years. Yellow-rumped Warblers are common at this elevation and you should at least hear an Olive-sided Flycatcher calling in the vicinity. It is worthwhile to make a loop walk here by hiking up along the creek and carefully checking the tops of willow clumps for the highly territorial male Calliope Hummingbirds. Dusky Flycatchers are found in this habitat and often nest in the aspens. After reaching the upper portion of this wet area, cut to the left to traverse the hillside. A few trails can be followed that will help you skirt the edge of the hillside while you try to sort out the

subtle differences in the calls of Fox Sparrows and Green-tailed Towhees which are common here. The area is also good for Mountain Quail, particularly in late summer when family groups are scurrying about. Note the grassy meadow and marsh below you in the direction of Ice House Store as you complete your circuit. The area of wet grasses and adjacent shrubs is home to a pair of Lincoln's Sparrows. Coming back to your starting point, be alert for Red-breasted Sapsuckers that nest in the aspens. Look for the Western Wood-pewees here since the area is well-suited to their nesting and foraging needs. Two hours is not too long to spend roaming around this delightful location.

Return to the main road and note your odometer reading as you pass Ice House Store. Continue driving 1.5 miles to Big Hill Lookout Road. Turn left onto this road and drive a hundred yards or so and park. Walking, continue going down this road and observe the mature fir forest on your right. This is prime habitat for Hammond's Flycatcher. Also, listen for the distinctive, three-noted "MacPherson!" call of the Olive-sided Flycatcher. Mountain Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Hermit Warblers are common here and a little looking should help you find a beautiful Western Tanager. Some of the gigantic sugar pines in the area are 600 years old. In this old growth forest, Pileated Woodpeckers occur and Spotted Owls have been heard in the period between late April and early July. To your left is a logged area that still has some standing snags and a mix of chaparral and conifers. White-headed Woodpeckers sometimes nest in the standing snags in this area.

After birding this area, return to the intersection with the Crystal Basin Road. To reach Loon Lake and to continue the rest

of this birding route, turn left and proceed up the main road.

(Note: If you do wish to visit Ice House Reservoir and campground, drive (east) across the intersection and continue one mile to the entrance to the campground. The reservoir is usually crowded with people and the birding is only fair. A much better alternative is to turn left from the entrance to the campground and drive 8.5 miles to the Wright's Lake Road. The road is paved the entire distance. Upon reaching the Wright's Lake Road, turn left and continue for 2 miles to the Wright's Lake Campground. Park at the picnic area. Birding in the vicinity of Wright's Lake can be very productive. Specialty birds include Blue Grosbeak, Northern Goshawk, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Pine Grosbeak, and Cassin's Finch. This area is particularly attractive in late summer when many warbler species have ascended to high elevations and have formed loose flocks prior to migration. When leaving Wright's Lake, continue back down the road past the previous intersection and proceed ahead 8 miles more to Highway 50. This will complete the loop and a full day of birding for returning to Sacramento.)

If you are continuing on the Crystal Basin Road to Loon Lake, the next two miles from the intersection with Big Hill Lookout Road are your best bet for Pileated Woodpeckers. Stop frequently to look and listen. You should find Golden-crowned Kinglets foraging high in the tops of the conifers. Check the trunks for Brown Creepers working up the trees. Hermit Thrushes are sometimes heard in the distance. You have also reached the primary area for Hermit Warblers. They are common at this elevation and nearly every stop should put you in earshot of these beautiful warblers which sing from the upper levels of the conifers. They often sing three high, thin lisping notes followed by two lower notes.

As you continue up the road, you will pass by the Crystal Basin Ranger Station on your right. The next 6 1/2 miles to the Union Valley Reservoir overlook should be checked carefully for White-headed Woodpeckers, Hammond's Flycatchers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrushes, Hermit Warblers, and Cassin's Finches. Sometimes Evening Grosbeaks can be found and, in some years, Red Crossbills.

To view Union Valley Reservoir, continue driving until the road passes under some power lines. You will note large-diameter water pipes that feed into the reservoir. This location provides one of the better views of the reservoir although the water itself never seems to have many birds of interest. Keep viewing the skies, however, as Bald Eagles have nested along the shores of this lake near Yellow-Jacket Campground. Also, check the sky at this location for Vaux's Swifts. Although not a confirmed breeder here, the species has been noted here during the breeding season.

Turning away from the reservoir, note on the hillside the black oaks interspersed with the chaparral. In this interesting mixture you may again find Black-throated Gray Warblers and Black-headed Grosbeaks, species quite different from the norm of the past several miles through fir forest. Acorn Woodpeckers, rather unusual for being so high in the Sierra, have sometimes been seen at this location. This south-facing exposure favors trees and shrubs partial to a drier, warmer environment and illustrates how a particular habitat is coupled with its own distinctive set of birds.

Continuing another two miles brings you to a summit. Look for a sign that reads "Cheese Camp Road, Van Vleck Ranch 5."

There is plenty of room for parking here and it is still a fairly good area to bird although selective logging has removed some of the larger trees that were favored by Pileated Woodpeckers in the past. Incense cedar, ponderosa pine, and a sprinkling of black oak make this area an attractive habitat for many species including Townsend's Solitaire and Hermit Thrush.

By this time you may have seen most of the birds you are looking for and may wish to head back. But if you do continue another 3 1/2 miles, the road forks. The right fork goes five miles to Loon Lake (elevation 6,400 feet). Loons are really quite rare here and are not to be expected even in migration. One might find, however, a few species of waterfowl including Canada Geese and Common Merganser. Sometimes a California Gull is seen patrolling the lake which is actually a reservoir operated by Sacramento Municipal Utility District (S.M.U.D.) for electrical power generation. There is camping and fishing available, but the birding here is rather slow. Back at the intersection of the main road and the Loon Lake Road, the left fork, Wentworth Springs Road, if followed for 0.2 miles brings you to a cut-over area on the right that is now regrowing and changing rapidly. It is productive for several species of woodpeckers along with specialties like Dusky Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, MacGillivray's Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, and Fox Sparrow. You are now 25 miles from Highway 50 and this is a good place to go over your day's list before heading back. Note that missing from your list are Rock Doves, House Sparrows, and Starlings! Instead it should show some really fine specialty birds and provide you with numerous reasons to return again.

I always welcome your comments related to this area and its birdlife. Such comments are very useful to future revisions of this article and can be sent to Ed Harper, Mathematics Dept., American River College, 4700 College Oak Dr. Sacramento, CA 95841.

Ed Harper

WHERE'S THE SEED?

For the last two years, the mid-west's millet crops have been hard hit by natural disaster: drought, flood, you name it. Bird seed prices skyrocketed. Then in early spring we were told by our distributor that there was simply not enough millet available to produce the Volkman Premium and Audubon seed mixes that we sell at our seed sales. Rather than sell bird seed at high prices and with lots of useless filler seed, we decided to cancel our spring/summer seed sale.

We have now been told that things look a lot better for next year. Millet crops are anticipated at historic levels. However, the millet is being grown this summer and who knows what will happen. So, our distributor has told us not to plan on a seed sale until the latter half of October. There is so much pent-up demand that even if the crop is a good one, distribution will take longer than usual.

So, please bear with us. There is really nothing we can do except hope that the millet grows and that the birds will survive until October. Look for your seed sale order form in the September *Gull* and thanks for your patience.

BOOK REVIEW

The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas by W. David Shuford, Bushtit Books, 1993

As indicated by its subtitle, "A Distributional and Natural History of Coastal California Birds," this impressive work extends its reach well beyond a single county and will be of great value to readers throughout coastal Northern California. Not merely an atlas, it pulls together exhaustive, well-referenced natural history information on 163 species, backed up by 31 pages of literature references. Author Dave Shuford has also drawn extensively on his own two decades of experience as an avid Marin County birder and ornithologist, and he has lined up a highly qualified array of experts to write accounts on selected species. Adding greatly to the book's appeal are the numerous bird drawings by Keith Hansen, habitat drawings by Ane Rovetta, bird photographs by Ian Tait, and maps by Dewey Livingston. Birders and bird lovers of all sorts will find much to inform, fascinate, and entertain them in the volume's 479 large-format pages.

This bird atlas, like others, includes a distributional map for each species and an account of its Marin breeding distribution. Thankfully, the maps and legends are cleanly produced and easy to read. The author provides careful evaluations of the *meaning* of these maps, concluding, for example, that the map for Red Crossbills is probably incomplete as the atlas surveys were conducted during a season (April to July) when this species is least likely to breed. The "Results and Discussion" chapter also provides a detailed analysis of the county's breeding avifauna, including patterns of species richness, distributional highlights, and a classification of bird communities. The atlas effort revealed many surprises: that Grasshopper Sparrows, for example, are fairly common and widespread, and that Cooper's Hawks are regular though secretive breeders; and it yielded many first breeding records, including Redbreasted Sapsuckers, Say's Phoebes, and Northern Parulas. I also appreciated the extensive data provided from other studies, including tables of breeding records for herons, Ospreys, and sea-bird colonies. In addition, appendices show actual data from Spring Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys in the county.

Some of my favorite reading in the species accounts was in the sections on "Historical Trends/Population Threats." The author has analyzed atlas results in relation to published literature and Breeding Bird Surveys to detect causal factors. We learn not only about the well-known expansions of cowbirds and starlings, but also of the spread of Cliff Swallows and Hooded Orioles in the county, due to the proliferation of nest-sites in the form of buildings and palm trees, respectively. And we learn the probable reasons for declines of Black Rails and Clapper Rails (loss of tidal salt marsh) and Vaux's Swifts (logging of old-growth forests).

In the initial 72 pages, Mr. Shuford provides a wealth of information on Marin County birds, their habitats, and factors influencing their distribution. He describes in detail the meth-

ods for producing this atlas, and includes an excellent history of other bird-atlas projects. Also of note are the discussion of Marin County geography and climate; an outstanding section on ocean currents, upwelling, and their relationship to sea-bird biology and coastal climate; and a detailed summary of the "Timing of Breeding." The descriptions of native-plant communities are richly detailed and thoroughly tailored to the county's local conditions, although I would have liked to see more discussion of "additional breeding bird habitats" at the end (cliffs, banks, snags, farmlands, reservoirs, and seasonal wetlands are not described). For those interested in conservation issues, Mr. Shuford provides useful discussions of exotic plants (p. 27-28); a detailed, well-referenced history of human impacts on the county's birds and their habitats (p. 31-35); a section on "How to Use This Book as a Conservation Tool"; and a preliminary list of Breeding Bird Species of Special Concern in Marin County (p. 72).

This work is clearly a labor of love by one who is intimately familiar with Marin County's birds and their environment. I highly recommend it.

Steve Granholm

PELAGIC TRIP TO THE FARALLONES

It's time to sally forth on the high seas again, to the **Farallones** in calmer days of August when nesting for most island breeders has finished and when fall migrants have begun to pass through the area. We'll leave from Emeryville on Saturday, August 13, cut across the Bay and through the Golden Gate and make our way, directly or circuitously depending on the day and the birds, to the Farallones, 22 miles west of San Francisco. There's no going ashore, but we'll circle the islands to get a feel for these barren but productive rocks, perhaps catching a glimpse of the PRBO scientists at work amongst the gulls, cormorants, murres. Weather permitting, we'll continue a little further out toward the edge of the continental shelf.

We'll expect to see multiple species of shearwaters, auklets, jaegers and storm petrels, and maybe an albatross or two. This can also be a productive time of year for mammals and Humpback and Blue whales are both possible, along with a number of species of dolphins.

Leader: Joe Morlan. Cost: \$42.50 per person. Send checks payable to GGAS to 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA, 94710, by August 1 to reserve your place.

RARE BIRD UPDATE

Come fall, the Northern California Rare Bird Alert is going to be changing. We will be installing a computerized voice-mail system and callers will be able to listen directly to the actual messages of people reporting unusual sightings. This will eliminate the need for a person to be available on a daily basis to announce the updates. The hope is that someone will be interested in taking the voice-mail messages and using them to create a weekly update. A second person would be needed to do computer entry to maintain the ongoing database. If you have an interest in doing either of these important jobs, call the office at (510) 843-2222.

Observations

Daniel Singer

A deep-water pelagic trip out of Sausalito on 5/7 reported thirty-eight Black-footed Albatross, five **Murphy's Petrels**, one Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel and fourteen Leach's Storm-Petrels (BHi, SBT). Sooty Shearwater was abundant off SF and MRN from 5/16-5/18 with up to 50,000 reported (AMF,GDe).

An adult Little Blue Heron was in Alviso, SCL from 5/21 - 5/26 (PJM, SCR). At least one Eurasian Wigeon remained through 5/15 at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN (JBo). Three Oldsquaws were reported: two from the SM coast on 5/5 and 5/15 (RSTh, BMcK) and one from Brooks Island, CC on 5/11 (ES). Three Black Scoters were also reported this month, all from Point Reyes, MRN: one at the Fish Docks on 5/30 and two at Limantour on 5/15 (both JBo).

An American Golden-Plover was reported from Moon Glow Dairy, MTY on 5/8 (JBo). An adult alternate-plumaged **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was well described from the SM coast on 5/14-5/15 (DPo, RSTh). This may be the first spring record of this species in California, is certainly one of very few adults ever observed in our state and possibly only the second spring report for the West Coast south of Alaska! A Franklin's Gull was seen from Pescadero Beach, SM on 5/17 (RSTh). Approximately a dozen Sabine's Gulls were seen on the 5/7 deep-water pelagic trip from Sausalito (BHi, SBT) and five were reported from Pigeon Pt., SM on 5/15 (BS fide RSTh). Arctic Tern is seldom seen from shore so two reported from Ft. Funston, SF on 5/14 are noteworthy (ASH). Two Black Skimmers were at Spud Point, Bodega Bay, SON on 5/22 (NTC).

Most unusual in spring was a **White-winged Dove** at the RCA Station, Pt. Reyes, MRN on 5/28 (BDP). This species has occurred only three previous times in Northern California during the spring. An adult Long-eared Owl with two chicks was discovered in west MRN on 5/

15 (GMk, RS). Confirmed nestings of this poorly-understood species are few and far between in our region. A coastal Lesser Nighthawk was at Ano Nuevo, SM on 5/15 (DPo fide RSTh). Also coastal was a Lewis' Woodpecker at the Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes, MRN on 5/6 (RS). Fifty-three Black Swifts were reported between 5/7 and 5/29 from SCL, SM, and SON (m.ob.) with most of these passing over Loma Prieta, SCL on 5/24 when a total of thirty birds were seen at two locations (SCR/RJe, SCR).

True to form, nine of ten Willow Flycatcher reports spanned 5/15 - 6/5. One of our later spring migrants, its appearance is a sign that the northward movement of passerines is beginning to wind down. Seventeen more Hammond's Flycatchers were reported between 5/8 - 5/20 mostly from the interior hills, making for another banner year. Up to four Dusky Flycatchers were reported: two were migrants along Mines Road, SCL on 5/15 (MMR) and two were presumably on territory at Mt. Saint Helena, SON on 5/31 (BDP). The only Gray Flycatcher report so far this spring is from Montibello Ridge, SCL on 5/21 (SCR). A Cassin's Kingbird was reported from the SM coast on 5/11 (BS fide RSTh) and an **Eastern Kingbird** put in an appearance at McGinnis Park, San Rafael, MRN on 5/31 (CLF).

A Townsend's Solitaire on 5/14 at Mt. Diablo, CC was rather late (GBi). During its short history the Big Sur Ornithology Lab has already supplied Monterey with several exceptional records. Most recent was the first county record of **White-eyed Vireo** on 6/4 (CHo). There are less than 10 accepted records of this very rare vagrant in our region, with most occurring in spring. For the third consecutive spring a Yellow-throated Vireo was observed at the Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes, MRN. This year's was on 5/7 (RS). A second Yellow-throated Vireo was observed in Lincoln Park, SF on 5/31 (ASH), a probable first

for the city of SF. A Red-eyed Vireo was seen in Ahjamawe Lava Springs State Park, SHA on 5/28 (PEG).

Eleven species of vagrant warblers were reported this month and included some spectacular rarities. As expected, all were along the coast except for one American Redstart at Piper Slough, CC on 5/21 (EPd). Tops among them would certainly be the singing **Blue-winged Warbler** in Galloway Canyon, MRN on 5/18 (PP). A Tennessee Warbler was at the Fishdocks, Pt. Reyes, MRN on 5/10 (RS). A singing **Lucy's Warbler**, apparently the first for our region in spring, was just south of San Gregorio, SM on 5/8 (RSTh). Five Northern Parulas were reported: three from SM between 5/5 and 6/4 (RSTh, DPo, BS) and one each from SF and MRN on 5/31 (JM, KH respectively). One Chestnut-sided Warbler was seen at the Carmel River Mouth, MTY on 6/4 (CHo) and a single Black-and-white Warbler was banded in Big Sur, MTY on 6/5 (CHo). In addition to the inland individual cited above, four coastal American Redstarts were reported during the latter half of the month: two from Pescadero, SM 5/22 and 5/29 (RSTh) and one each from MTY on 6/4 (CHo) and SON on 6/4 (BDP). The only Northern Waterthrush of the season to date was a singing male in San Gregorio on 6/2 (RSTh). A male **Mourning Warbler**, a very rare vagrant particularly in spring, was banded at the Big Sur Ornithology Lab on 5/31 (CHo). San Francisco produced two Hooded Warblers, the first at McClaren Park on 5/30-6/4 (DSg, ASH, m.ob.) and the second at Mt. Davidson on 6/4 (ASH).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was along Pescadero Creek, SM on 6/4 (RSTh). A female Black-headed Grosbeak carrying nest material at Mt. Davidson, SF on 5/28 (DSg) marks the first time this species has bred in the city in years. A migrant Blue Grosbeak was at Lincoln Park, SF on 5/20 (ASH). Five or six Indigo Buntings were reported from SCL, SM

Observations (cont.)

and NAP between 5/7 and 6/4 (SCR, MMR, SGI, RSTh, RLCL). The singing male in Napa was present from 5/14 through 6/4 (RLCL, m.ob.). Three or four Black-throated Sparrows were reported from Fall River, SHA on 6/2 (fide BY) and a single bird was seen along Lone Rd., SAC on 5/9 (EDG). A Sage Sparrow observed in Belmont on 5/29 is an anomaly (RSTh) as vagrants are seldom encountered and I don't think the species breeds in SM (though it does in neighboring SCL and SCZ).

Monterey's first **Great-tailed Grackle** was seen flying over the mouth of the Carmel River on 5/8 (JBo). Another or perhaps the same individual was seen the next day at Moonglow Dairy by the same observer! A Great-tailed Grackle was also reported from Pt. Arena, MEN on 6/3 (JRW). Up to thirty Red Crossbills at PRNS Headquarters, MRN on 5/7 included adults feeding fledglings (JM, LLu, m.ob.). This may be one of very few breeding confirmations for MRN, even though the species is routinely seen much of the time in appropriate habitat.

Observers: Florence G. Bennet, Jim Booker, Bob Brandriff, Joelle Buffa, Ken Burton, Rich Cimino, Nancy T. Conzett, J. Scott Cox, Gary Deghi, Carter L. Faust, Allen M. Fish, George Finger, Frank Gardner, Steve Glover, Philip E. Gordon, Ed Greaves, Helen Green, Keith Hansen, Kevin G. Hints, Bob Hirt, David Hofmann, Craig Hohenberger, Alan S. Hopkins, Richard Jeffers, Robin L.C. Leong, Leslie Lieurance, Michael J. Mammoser, Gloria Markowitz, Peter J. Metropulos, Joe Morlan, Ed Pandolfino, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Peter Pyle, David Powell, Mike M. Rogers, Mary Louise Rosegay, Steve C. Rottenborn, Dean Sandee, Barry Saupe, Dianne Sierra, Dan Singer, Rich Stallcup, Daniel Stoebel, Emilie Strauss, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Jerry R. White, Denise Wight, Bob Yutzy.

Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California Rare Bird Alert.

WHERE DO BIRDS GO?

We are excited in the spring when migrants arrive. The beautiful colors are very special; the songs add new excitement. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer of these birds arrive each spring. Have you noticed?

Through the program *Birds in the Balance*, National Audubon Society is working to protect nesting areas in North America. But do you realize what happens to those migrants after they fly away? They spend much of the year to the south of us -- in areas with extensive habitat damage. And it continues. All of our efforts to protect nesting areas in the north will be of little use if those migrants are lost when they return south!

From Mexico to Venezuela there are a few people and some Audubon groups who are aware of this continuing disaster and who are struggling against substantial odds to limit further destruction to bird habitat. They recognize that destruction of the ecosystem adversely affects their own lives as well as those of the wildlife. They are doing their best with limited resources and are achieving some promising results.

GGAS would like to establish a working relationship with one of these groups. Even a small effort on our part will produce a large return for them. We need to decide which country and what actions are best-suited to our circumstances. National Audubon has provided a number of suggestions. Give us your ideas. Let's put a plan together and see what we can accomplish!

An organizing meeting will be held on Thursday, September 14, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at 76 Hillcrest Rd., Berkeley. There are lots of ways that you can make a difference. Come with your questions and ideas and a helping hand. For further information, phone Miles McKey, (510) 652-5854.

Ed. Note: sometime in the next six months, Oxford University Press will be publishing *A Guide to Birds of Mexico & Northern Central America* by Steven N. G. Howell and Sophie Webb. We think it important that this work be translated into Spanish and would welcome suggestions on how to fund and accomplish this.

MONEY RAISING THROUGH EARTH SHARE

One of Golden Gate Audubon's sources of income is Earth Share of California (formerly, the Environmental Federation), made up of 82 environmental groups. Last year, Earth Share raised over \$2.3 million for its members, a 21% increase from the year before. GGAS's share was over \$5,000, about 7% of our total budget.

How does Earth Share do it? By organizing and running workplace giving campaigns. Employees of participating corporations and government agencies can support the environment through payroll deductions, either by making a general contribution to Earth Share which then divides up the money among its 82 member groups, or by designating one or more of the groups to receive their contribution. Contributions to Earth Share have been increasing every year, an indication of the concern that working people have about the environment in general and its effect on their health and welfare.

As a GGAS member you can help us raise money through Earth Share. If your workplace has an employee giving campaign, it should include Earth Share as one of the contribution options. If it doesn't, please urge your company to make Earth Share available. Studies have shown that when Earth Share is added as an option, the overall level of giving goes up and all participating organizations benefit. The more campaigns where Earth Share is an available option, the more financial support we will receive.

Workplace campaigns are easy and cost effective. They are a great way for employers to support their employees' interests and to show their commitment to the environment and the community. Earth Share participates in the campaigns at Safeway Stores, Kaiser Permanente, Levi Strauss, Charles Schwab & Co., Patagonia, and Santa Clara County, among others. For more information, call Earth Share at (415) 882-9330 or call the GGAS office at (510) 843-2222.

News from the Ranch

Dan Murphy

The Ranch's public season ends on July 17, so there's still a little time to get a last glimpse of those huge "baby" herons and egrets. The wildflowers are long gone, but the smells and sounds of the forest will give a wonderful dimension to any hike you take. Try one of the long trails on a hot summer day just to enjoy the different micro-climates. The cool of the redwood groves will be a refreshing contrast to the still heat of the oaks and chaparral. On the open grasslands notice the soft breeze even on the warmest days and watch for the soaring birds which ride the rising thermals.

Thanks for the help

To all of our friends who came out to volunteer during the public season, we would like to say thanks. We really couldn't do it without your help. That first impression that hosts make on our visitors is so very important; it lets them know ACR is a friendly place where they can enjoy nature in any of a number of different ways. Our ranch guides deserve a lot of credit too as they help visitors gain a greater understanding of our ponds, Bolinas Lagoon and the heronry. Our faithful weekend staff also deserves accolades: Edris Cole and Ray Peterson are a significant part of why a visit to the Ranch is such a special experience for so many.

And of course, our docents, though not present on these spring and summer weekends, play an important part in our public season. I don't think I've ever hosted at the Ranch

Fall Classes in S. F.

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan will be starting September 7, 8 and 13. All classes meet 7-9:30 p.m. in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. There is free parking in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

The instructor is co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and compiler of the recorded "Northern California Rare Bird Alert" sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all classes and the text for all classes is *A Field Guide to Birds of North America*, second edition, by the National Geographic Society.

Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining the learning of basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology and behavior. Part A starts September 13 and ends October 25; Part B starts November 1 and ends December 13.

Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays. It is a

without meeting at least one person whose only reason for visiting is because of the terrific experience they had when there were at the ranch on a school field trip. It's not so surprising when the visitor is a child, but I always have to laugh when someone drives in and says she visited the ranch 20 years ago and has planned to return ever since. Wow! That's what I think is a great tribute to our docents.

Tomales Bay Volunteer Opportunity

Make Tomales Bay part of your fall migration birding plans. We can always use the help of experienced birders in our shorebird counts during August and early September. Dates aren't set yet, but if you call John Kelly at (415) 663-8203 he can give you information about this and other ongoing field studies at Tomales Bay.

Docent Training

This is your last chance to joining the 1994 Docent Training Class which begins in September. The twenty-two Wednesday classes are designed to provide new docents with the information and confidence needed to lead groups of 4th and 5th-grade students on nature walks at the Ranch and to provide instruction in the classroom. An orientation session is scheduled for August 31. If you're interested in learning more about docent training, please call us at (415) 868-9244. There is a \$90 fee for this program.

continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American water birds, including gulls, terns, and alcids. Part A starts September 7 and ends October 19; part B starts October 26 and ends December 14.

Field Ornithology III meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of land birds including warblers, buntings, and sparrows. Part A starts September 8 and ends October 20; Part B starts October 27 and ends December 15.

These classes are endorsed by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Optional field trips on weekends may be arranged by the instructor. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them.

Fees are \$70 for each seven week course. Pre-registration is recommended. For information call the San Francisco City College Continuing Education Office at 415-561-1840 or 415-267-6545.

Gifts

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for **Audubon Adventures**: U.C. Section Club - Birding Division; for **Audubon Canyon Ranch**: Grange S. Coffin, M.D., Mary C. Dunlap; for **Alameda Naval Air Station Symposium**: Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society; for **Rare Bird Alert**: Jane F. Becker-Haven; for **Papageno Project**: Joan Keller, Dorothy Shattuck; **In Memory of Omer (Pat) L. Gileau**: Legal Division, California Public Utilities Commission; **In Memory of Judy Bellamy and Joyce Crooks**: Mary L. Roberts; **In Memory of Juanita Arnerich**: Paul A. Arnerich; **In Memory of Edna Ellern**: Cordelia A. Neal; **In Memory of Bruce Walker**: Jan Andersen, Edward and Mildred Bennett, Lucia Brandon, Susan D. Stern Cemy, Ruth Dement, Pat Gannon, John and Jean Leahy, Leslie Lethridge, Miles and Mary Ellen McKey, Elizabeth Stanek and John Ratts, Dwight Steele, Victorian Janitorial and Maintenance Service, Ruth Vose and Arthur Feinstein

Calling All Birds

Every spring Piedmont High School courts fame and giggles as it attempts to one-up Mother Nature on the vaudeville stage. The performance always rates coverage on the local news and even Johnny Carson succumbed to the siren song one year. We're referring of course to the annual bird-calling contest.

Each year students, alone and in teams, vie to present the most realistic, exotic, imaginative and entertaining bird calls they can get their vocal chords to produce. Years ago thrushes and thrashers might have carried the day, but nowadays winners must go further afield (places like the rain forests of Borneo) to find inspiration. The calls are transcendently rendered, accurate down to the last tweet, flute and flutter, but the moves,

patter and shtick are like no Nightingale that we've ever met. This year, students participating in the school's Junior Achievement Program and interested in seeing what it was like to run a business, astutely decided to sell t-shirts celebrating the bird-calling contest. Their success was more on the order of "senior" achievement.

With birds on their minds, the entrepreneurs decided to donate all of their profits, an astounding \$375.00, to Golden Gate Audubon Society to further our conservation and education efforts. GGAS Board member Russ Wilson appeared at a ceremony held at the school to receive the donation and thank the students and tell them about Golden Gate Audubon.

GGAS sends Piedmont High a great thank you and a toast from the Olive-sided Flycatcher who, after watching the spectacle, can only cry: quick, three beers. The Rufous-sided Towhee, sober as usual, replies: drink your tea. And the Greater Pewee summarizes succinctly: Jose Maria!



Field Trips Calendar

Thursday-Sunday, July 7-10

Backpacking trip to Snag Lake in Lassen Volcanic National Park. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich.

Saturday-Sunday, July 30-31 Yosemite Alpine Ecology Hiking Trip

This annual trip to the High Sierra is by reservation only. If you have not already made your reservation you may be too late. Leader: George Peyton. (510) 444-3131 (weekdays)

For details on the above trips, see *The Gull* for June.

Saturday, July 16 Golden Gate Park (east end)

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Dahlia Garden located 100 feet east of the Conservatory building. During this morning walk we will concentrate in the live oak habitat looking for summer residents. Lunch is optional for those who wish to stay. Beginners welcome. Leader: Mike Healy (415) 664-3654 (h) or (415) 495-6320 (w)

Saturday, August 13 Farallon Islands Pelagic Trip

Boat trip from Emeryville to the Farallones and beyond to see local nesters, pelagic migrants and marine mammals. (See article on page 51.) Cost \$42.50 per person. Send check to GGAS office to reserve place. Leader: Joe Morlan (\$)

Saturday, September 10 Coastal San Francisco

Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot between South and Middle lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Ave. and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in the park, Lake Merced, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of warblers, flycatchers and vagrants. Bring your lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074. (*)

Wednesday, September 14 Mini-trip to Alameda South Shore and surrounding areas

Meet at 9 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Dr. We will be looking for shorebirds and waterfowl. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (*). See below.

Problems: if you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chair (510) 524-2399

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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